

(October 17th, 2024)

If you know someone who would benefit from being an Insider, feel free to forward this PDF to them so they can sign up [here](#).



Note: As an Insider, you can read all prior Insider newsletters [here](#).

Quick Tips for our Insider friends!

Happy Fall to you all (autumn for anyone not in the US/Canada)!

Black Friday Super-Sale!

It's the time of year again where companies do crazy sales on the day after Thanksgiving in the US, and we're doing the same!

Starting at 4pm PST on Thursday, November 28th, we'll be offering our **lowest prices ever** for our signature Blackbelt bundle with more than 158 hours of top-quality training (plus all our SQL Server 2022 update/Q&A recordings):

- **One-year access to the Blackbelt bundle: US\$990**
- ***Lifetime* access to the Blackbelt bundle: US\$1,895**

From Monday, December 2 12:00am GMT (starting at 4pm PST on Sunday, December 1) and until 12:00am GMT December 17 (ending at 4pm PST on Monday, December 16), we will offer lower than our regular prices but not as deep of discounts as Black Friday. If you've already purchased the Blackbelt bundle once, you can purchase the one-year access for a second time and we'll convert your existing access into lifetime access, by removing all the expiration dates.

We going to do mini-newsletters each week through October and November so stay tuned as I'll be adding some more sale prices on courses and bundles!

Any questions, please [let me know](#).

Book Review

One of the books I read earlier this year was [Making it So: A Memoir](#) by Patrick Stewart. Sir Patrick is one of my favorite actors and I immensely enjoyed learning how his life has progressed. From Amazon: "From his acclaimed stage triumphs to his legendary onscreen work in the Star Trek and X-Men franchises, Sir Patrick Stewart has captivated audiences around the world and across multiple generations with his indelible command of stage and screen. Now, he presents his long-awaited memoir, Making It So, a revealing portrait of an artist whose

astonishing life—from his humble beginnings in Yorkshire, England, to the heights of Hollywood and worldwide acclaim—proves a story as exuberant, definitive, and enduring as the author himself." Highly recommended!

The Curious Case of...

This section of the newsletter explains recent problems we've helped with on client systems or been asked about over email or #sqlhelp; they might be something you're experiencing too.

Earlier this year Jonathan had a curious case while helping a client figure out a cluster issue, but no information was in the error logs, cluster logs, or Windows event logs! You can read through Jonathan's explanation [here](#)...

Ponderings...

We've all heard about ransomware attacks and the havoc it can wreak on the organization that gets hit. For example:

- In 2023, the British Library website was hit and remained down for months. After refusing to pay the ransom, they used an estimated 40% of their financial reserves (\$6-7 million) to recover. ([Wikipedia source](#))
- In 2021, Colonial Pipeline was hit which caused gas shortages and led to state of emergency being declared in 17 states and Washington, D.C. Even though they paid the \$4.4 million ransom, the recovery tool provided took a very long time to complete. ([Wikipedia source](#))

There are many more documented cases, and likely a *lot* more undocumented cases. According to the [2023 FBI Internet Crime Report](#), there was a 15% increase in ransomware cases reported to the FBI from 2022 to 2023. Both the cases I cited above were deemed as entirely preventable if proper security practices had been followed.

This year we've helped two clients recover from devastating ransomware attacks (one was made public, the other not). In each case, Jonathan spent around 40 hours helping coordinate and implement SQL Server recovery, one involving working through the night.

If your organization gets hit, as a SQL Server professional, your focus is going to be on bringing your servers and databases online with the minimal amount of data loss and downtime. But there are many potential snags along the way, such as:

- Who has authority to make decisions on how to move forward?

- Do you have redundant copies of things like encryption keys and account passwords? And are they stored on an air-gapped system that wouldn't be compromised if your entire network was?
- How long does it take for your backups to restore? And what if the VM or physical servers were wiped?
- Can you even start rebuilding if a service like Active Directory isn't there?

It's a long list of considerations. Unfortunately, we find over and over that many companies aren't very prepared for a disaster of any kind. Performance is king – which we see when we teach classes and performance tuning classes sell out but our HA/DR class is often only half full.

Call to action: Be concerned about ransomware and other cyber-attacks. You absolutely need to be prepared for a disaster because it's not just physical disasters that can hit your organization. We're here to help you prepare, analyze your current plans, and recover if you get hit. [Drop us a line!](#)

#TBT

(Turn Back Time...) Blog posts we've published since the previous newsletter plus some older resources we've referred to recently that you may find useful.

The theme for #TBT is communication skills, so here are some resources for you:

- My Pluralsight course on [Communications: How to Talk, Write, Present, and Get Ahead!](#) that has 2 hours covering skills for communicating, running and attending meetings, all forms of writing from emails to articles, and how to write and deliver presentations. (reworked and rerecorded in 2023)
- And a bunch of blog posts:
 - [Public Speaking: A Primer](#)
 - [Ignorance is not stupidity](#)
 - [It depends. It really, really does.](#)
 - [RTFM. No seriously, R.T.F.M. Then ask your question.](#)
 - [Learning to listen](#)
 - [How to ask questions politely and correctly](#)
 - [How to answer questions politely and correctly](#)

I hope you find these useful and interesting!

Video Demo

In this demo video, Jon takes a look at the Vulnerability Assessment report in SQL Server Management Studio and explains the versions where the report is available, what the report

shows, why it has been removed from SSMS recently and what replacement there is for the functionality.

The video is 5 minutes long and you can get it in MP4 format [here](#).

Enjoy!

Upcoming SQLskills Events

Given how little changed with SQL Server 2022, we decided to record a series of updates relevant to our class material rather than running full classes. These are done as part of our Blackbelt Base Camp series and are available in our shop, or free with a Blackbelt bundle.

With our streaming system, you can now choose to attend a live, online event or purchase a recording to watch at your leisure, either individually or as part of a bundle. And all attendees of live events get lifetime access to the class recordings too!

To help your boss understand the importance of focused, technical training, we've also added a few items to help you justify spending your training dollars with us:

- [Letter to your boss explaining why SQLskills training is worthwhile](#)
- [Community blog posts about our classes](#)
- [Immersion Event FAQ](#)

You can get all the details on our [training options page](#) or just go directly to our [shop](#).

Summary

I hope you've enjoyed this issue – I really enjoy putting these together. If there's anything else you're interested in, I'd love to hear from you - [drop me a line](#).

Thanks,

Paul

Paul@SQLskills.com